

REMARKS

The examiner's withdrawal of the prior ground of rejection (Tomizawa) is acknowledged.

The examiner has now rejected the independent claims (1 and 35) under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Creedon (US 4682324). The examiner is urged to reconsider and withdraw the new ground of rejection.

As amended, the independent claims have the following two limitations:

- (1) "giving the intermediate station the ability under some circumstances to transmit the second frame immediately without contending for access to the network"
- (2) "the second frame is either transmitted immediately or discarded by the intermediate station, without being stored in a buffer for later transmission".

These limitations make it possible for some frames to be forwarded without having to temporarily store the frames in a buffer and then contend for the right to transmit them. One possible implementation of these limitations is discussed in the next to the last paragraph of the detailed description:

Intermediate station resources (i.e., a receive buffer) must be available for a station to receive any frame that may be intended for it. In the case of an intermediate station acting as a relay, no additional receive buffer is required since the receive buffer is immediately emptied (frame retransmitted) and made available before any other traffic can arrive at the station (since the medium will be busy for the duration of the frame to and from the intermediate station). If the frame to be relayed cannot be retransmitted immediately, it will be dropped. A frame may not be able to be transmitted immediately (and is therefore dropped) if the forwarding frame is interrupted by a higher priority, or if the frame is too long to fit in a single segment because of the frame length and current channel map. In the latter case, the station returns a FAIL to the originating station. The reserved bits in FAIL could be used for a REASON field to return a fail reason code (i.e. indicate frame too long to forward) if there is more than one reason to return a FAIL.

done), Creedon stores the frame in a temporary storage buffer and then contends for the right to transmit it. Exactly the opposite of what the claim requires. The process is described in the opening paragraph of the detailed description (col. 2, lines 45-58):

FIG. 1 illustrates in a functional schematic form part of a network which includes a repeater 1 which is in a generally known form. Only the parts relevant to the present invention will be described. At least one of the ports 2 of the repeater is buffered so that data packets received at the port are temporarily stored in a buffer 4 until they can be transmitted from the repeater, after a contention-resolution process. The buffer has an output 7 to a contention-resolution function 8 which receives on inputs such as input 9 packets from other (non-buffered) ports. Packets transmitted as a result of the contention-resolution process are transmitted from the other ports 10, i.e. from the ports other than the port at which the packet was received.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 35 are in condition for allowance.

The remaining claims are all properly dependent on one or more of the independent claims, and thus allowable therewith. Each of the dependent claims adds one or more further limitations that enhance patentability, but those limitations are not presently relied upon. For that reason, and not because applicants agree with the examiner, no rebuttal is offered to the examiner's reasons for rejecting the dependent claims.

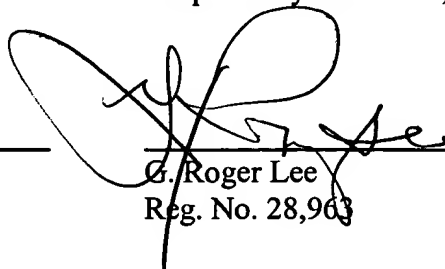
Allowance of the application is requested.

Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

6/2/05



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